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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV CALLS FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL ROLE,
CRITICIZES OSCE

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for Internet distribution.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: In his speech to Kazakhstan's top diplomats on November 19, President Nazarbayev asked the MFA to develop a new foreign policy concept that underscores Kazakhstan's growing role on the global scene. He noted that Kazakhstan's steady and careful political development helped assure its sovereignty and territorial integrity, allowed it to become a regional player, and made it a "worthy partner" of major geopolitical players. He reiterated Kazakhstan's commitment to good relations with Russia and China, and stressed his intention to increase ties with the new U.S. Administration. Nazarbayev outlined his priorities for relations with Central Asian states, the European Union, and the Persian Gulf. In a separate interview, Kazakhstan's President expressed frustration with the OSCE and European Union for concentrating too much on Kazakhstan's democratic development and ignoring the country's political environment. Kazakhstan will become a democracy, asserted the President, but it cannot do so overnight.
END SUMMARY.

"NEW CONCEPT" FOR FOREIGN POLICY

13. (SBU) On November 19, at the MFA's annual Chiefs of Missions gathering, President Nazarbayev laid out his vision for the future of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. He asked the MFA to develop a "new concept" of Kazakhstan's foreign policy "that underscores the increasing role of Kazakhstan on the world scene." The concept should encompass Kazakhstan's approach "to the most important international issues, foreign policy interests, and [Kazakhstan's] role in global and regional affairs," stressed Nazarbayev. The President went on to outline his future foreign policy priorities:

- securing Kazakhstan's regional borders,
- promoting the country's economic development,
- furthering Eurasian and Central Asian integration,
- carrying out a successful 2010 OSCE chairmanship,
- implementing the Path to Europe program,
- preparing for the 2011 Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) chairmanship,
- continuing to support inter-faith dialogue, including the third-annual World Religious Leaders Conference in Astana in 2009, and

-- developing further a regional security mechanism, including the 2010 summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building in Asia (CICA).

"A WORTHY PARTNER OF GEOPOLITICAL PLAYERS"

14. (SBU) Nazarbayev told the gathered diplomats that Kazakhstan's growing role on the international scene is due in large part to its steady political development. "Despite a difficult situation in the world, Kazakhstan is able to handle all outside challenges with confidence and dignity," he said. "We have not made dramatic mistakes in our political development," stressed the President, "and we have managed to strengthen our sovereignty and territorial integrity." Kazakhstan is now ready for a "more active foreign policy" based on "clear goals and strategies on how to reach them." The country has joined the ranks of "significant players in world politics," as proven by its 2008-2009 CICA chairmanship, its 2010 OSCE chairmanship, the 2011 OIC chairmanship, and its leadership roles in CICA and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). "We can say confidently that Kazakhstan has emerged as a regional power and a worthy partner of global geopolitical players," underlined Nazarbayev.

ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN IS A NATURAL CYCLE

15. (SBU) Nazarbayev noted that the current global economic slowdown is a serious reminder "of what happens when people live beyond their budget." He reminded the audience, however, that the slowdown is a "natural change in the global economic cycles. The crisis will sober up many people who engaged in blunt speculation, including those in this country." He noted that the fact that Kazakhstan was affected by the crisis means that the country "has become an inseparable part of the global economy." Nazarbayev

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praised the government for quickly developing and implementing a plan for economic stabilization and development.

THE MULTIVECTOR POLICY, WITH A STRESS ON UNITED STATES

16. (SBU) Nazarbayev reiterated Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy, saying that "Russia has always been and remains Kazakhstan's reliable ally, economic partner, and good neighbor" and that ties with China, Kazakhstan's "strategic partner" and a country with growing "global significance," must continue to grow. Turning to the United States, Nazarbayev said that he "intends to strengthen cooperation with the new U.S. administration." "The United States is a driving force of many world policies," stressed the President. He shared the details of his November 18 telephone conversation with President-elect Obama, in which they discussed regional security, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, and bilateral cooperation in the energy sphere, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and counter-terrorism. "Mr. Obama said he is a friend to Kazakhstan," noted President Nazarbayev, "and promised to increase the cooperation with Kazakhstan." "This is a good sign," concluded Nazarbayev, "and the Ministry should work on increasing ties with the new Administration."

17. (SBU) Nazarbayev stressed the need for greater regional cooperation in addressing common security challenges. "Interaction with Central Asian countries will remain one of Kazakhstan's top priorities," he emphasized. On relations with the European Union, Nazarbayev called for expeditious implementation of the Path to Europe, a program to increase economic, technological, and transport links with European countries. He noted that he will visit India in January and told the Ministry to adequately prepare for the visit "so that it serves as impetus for further development." He closed his remarks by saying that Kazakhstan, as a country that is part of the Islamic world, "assigns serious importance to relations with countries in the Persian Gulf" and will continue to improve relations with United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan.

OSCE TOO FOCUSED ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION

18. (SBU) While President Nazarbayev did not touch on Kazakhstan's

Madrid commitments during his speech to the country's top diplomats, he did express frustration in an interview the next day that the OSCE and the European Union are too focused on Kazakhstan's democratic development and ignore the country's political realities.

Kazakhstan will continue to build a democratic society, he maintained, but it can't happen at the pace the OSCE wants. "Democracy is a culture. This is the beginning, and not the end, of our way. We are moving in that direction," he stressed. Kazakhstan's priorities are securing independence, ensuring stability as a multiethnic state, and the gradual building of the democratic system. "We are approaching the goal at a steady pace," maintained the President, "but we can't skip steps, otherwise we'll overturn the whole wagon."

¶9. (SBU) Nazarbayev asserted that the OSCE makes disproportionate demands of post-Soviet states on democracy and doesn't pay enough attention to other priorities. The OSCE has four dimensions: security, economic cooperation, environmental protection, and the human dimension, he explained. "With regard to security, we did not see the OSCE when the Taliban were threatening to move through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. On economic cooperation, the European Union has not had a decisive economic effect on Central Asia. And environment cooperation has only been discussed in general terms." In all these years, maintained the President, the European Union and OSCE have focused exclusively on the fourth dimension, the human dimension. OSCE and EU officials come to post-Soviet states only to "observe elections and point out some flaws." "This would be constructive criticism, if it had not been blown out of proportion," maintained Nazarbayev. The push of some European states to turn post-Soviet countries into "the same democracies they are now is a laudable aspiration," he asserted. "We want the same thing, but we need to walk a long way to achieve it," he continued. (COMMENT: It is somewhat ironic that Nazarbayev was so openly critical of the EU, many of whose members supported Kazakhstan's desire to become Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, while he did not direct any such

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comments toward the United States, which did not initially endorse Kazakhstan. END COMMENT).

¶10. (SBU) COMMENT: Nazarbayev clearly laid out Kazakhstan's priorities - a greater role on the international scene, a careful but steady process of democratization, and continuation of Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy -- with an added emphasis on relations with the United States. With a new administration pending in Washington, we have a unique opportunity to further bilateral ties and increase our influence in Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev's criticism of the OSCE also sends a clear message: pushing too hard for reform will only harden resistance and may not produce results the OSCE, and we, would like. In the end, persistent, quiet diplomacy based on a realistic assessment of shared interests, coupled with a good deal of patience, will be the most effective way to achieve our goals. END COMMENT.

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